



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 6, 2014

President Shelly signs CIP five-year plan into law



Top, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signs the Navajo Nation Five-Year Plan into law as Leonard Chee, George Apachito, LoRenzo Bates, Katherine Benally and Jonathan Nez look on. Bottom, President Shelly shares the history of the capital improvement projects plan with listeners of KTNN AM 660 during the live remote broadcast from the Navajo Nation State Room. (Photos by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK—It took almost 14 years to complete.

On May 5, President Ben Shelly signed the Navajo Nation Five-Year Plan into law and finalized 14 years of effort for prioritizing capital improvement projects.

During the spring session last month, the 22nd Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0118-13 and recommended for approval to President Shelly the Navajo

Nation five-year capital improvement projects plan.

The multi-year plan is for capital expenditures, including a detailed one-year capital improvement budget. The priority list includes anticipated project costs, source of capital funds to complete projects, completion dates, and priority rankings.

The CIP plan includes various infrastructure projects, such as bathroom

additions, house wiring, power lines, waterlines, buildings, wastewater treatment plants, parking lots, roads, sewer lines, and heavy equipment.

Cause for Celebration

The mood was celebratory as President Shelly penned his name to the legislation.

The five-year CIP plan from 2013 to 2017 totals \$295,669,676.35 for projects from the 110 chapters.

The Division of Community Development, along with the Capital Improvement Office, hosted a barbecue luncheon at the Window Rock Veterans Park to kickoff the festivities.

President Shelly and members of the Navajo Nation Council provided remarks about the achievement during the luncheon, before sharing the news with the Navajo people during a live remote broadcast with KTNN AM 660 at the Office of the President and Vice President.

Navajo Nation Council

Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) said the CIP plan from the 110 chapters was a major legislation that involved a lot of effort from tribal leaders and provided a blueprint for infrastructure development moving forward.

She mentioned that perhaps the interest from the Permanent Trust Fund could be utilized to fund the projects for the 110 chapters.

“Thank you to the Resources and Development

Committee. We stood strong and worked on this. By a vote of 19-1, it passed Council. Thank you, delegates,” Benally said.

LoRenzo Bates (Nenahezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T’iistoh Sikaad, Tse’ Daa’ Kaan, Upper Fruitland) said passage of the CIP plan was a new beginning for the Navajo Nation.

“We’re moving forward in improvements that are needed at the chapter level, as well as at the central government level,” Bates said. “This has been in the making for nearly 14 years.”

He noted that the 2014-2015 budget for the Navajo Nation is the first time there will be no waiver of the Appropriations Act because of the unavailability of a five-year plan.

“The next big step is to fund these projects,” he added.

Jonathan Nez (Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Shonto, Tsah Bii Kin) gave appreciation to President Shelly and the 22nd Navajo Nation Council for moving the initiative forward.

“I want to say to the Navajo people that this is your voice and a lot of the chapter officials deserve great kudos,” Nez said. “I want to thank each and every one of them for bringing their project listings to the Council.”

He added that there is still time for chapters to submit proposals.

“At the end of the day, as President Shelly always states, ‘It’s about job creation.’ I believe there will be a lot of

job creation as a lot of these projects go into construction,” Nez said.

Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) said he was thankful for the careful deliberation from tribal leaders to approve the CIP plan.

“There are many challenges facing our people. We need roads for our school kids,” Hale said. “We are thankful for this legislation moving forward.”

George Apachito (Alamo, Ramah, Tohajiilee) agreed with his colleagues and said it was time to address the many needs out at the chapters, such as new buildings for the Navajo Head Start students.

He gave thanks to the vision and leadership of the Resources and Development Committee, Health and Human Services Committee, and Speaker Pro Tem Bates.

“To our Navajo people, these are your funds. We will be moving forward on your behalf. Ahe’hee,” Apachito said.

community needs, he said, and noted that task forces were formed to conduct real property inventory and identification of chapter boundaries.

“We have nearly \$2 billion in the Permanent Trust Fund and the interest from that is \$295 million, enough to fund these projects,” President Shelly said. “A lot of hard work went into working on this project listing for almost 14 years.

“We must combine our savings and leverage them against other funding sources to get this work done,” he added.

President Shelly said thanks and gratitude must be given to the past leaders that had a hand in developing the CIP plan, from Peterson Zah, Edward T. Begay, Albert Hale and Kelsey Begay.

“People say there’s bad things happening in Window Rock. That’s not what I see. I see planning and tribal leaders working together to move this



During the luncheon at Window Rock Veterans Park, attendees enjoyed hamburgers and hot dogs in celebration. OPVP Budget Manager Marjorie Johnson points to the food on Cyndy Taylor’s plate. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

“I see planning and tribal leaders working together to move this Nation forward.”

Working Together, Making Change Work

President Shelly was the final speaker for the KTNN live remote broadcast.

“This effort has been ongoing since 1998, during the days of the 88-member Navajo Nation Council, under the guidance of the former Transportation and Community Development Committee,” President Shelly said.

He said the CIP plan came directly from the Navajo chapters for infrastructure development.

They have conducted assessments for their

Nation forward,” he said.

“As leaders, we make decisions for the benefit of all. There’s three branches working together. Now’s the time to get working on behalf of your communities,” President Shelly said. “Together, we’re making change work.”

-30-



Left to right, Casey Begay, Jonathan Hale, Jonathan Nez, LoRenzo Bates, Leonard Chee, George Apachito, President Shelly, Katherine Benally. (Photo by Rick Abasta)